

aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa

WARREN, Edward

Some account of the letheon; or,  
Who was the discoverer? Boston,  
1847. 38 pp.

aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa

YALE  
MEDICAL LIB



HISTORICAL  
LIBRARY



IV. 16.

ACCOUNT OF LETHEON, 1st ed., 38 pp.

[March] 1847.

*Title:* Some account | of | the Letheon; | or, | who was the discoverer? | [short rule] | By Edward Warren. | [short rule] | Boston: | Dutton and Wentworth, Printers, | No. 37, Congress Street. | 1847.

*Collation:* 8°. Portrait, [1-3], 4-38 pp.

*Contents:* p.[1] title; p.[2] blank; portrait of Dr. Morton facing p.[3]; pp.[3]-38 text.

*Note:* The text, evidently composed in March of 1847, consists of series of dated letters, testimonials, and legal "disposals" from friends of Morton such as Grenville G. Hayden, William P. Leavitt, Thomas R. Spear, Jr., and Francis Whitman, purporting to establish Morton's claim to the introduction of surgical anesthesia against the claims of Charles Jackson and Horace Wells. The documents are interspersed with polemical comment, a statement by Warren, and also with passages from the public and medical press, including J. Mason Warren's history of the discovery from the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*. The text ends about three-quarters of the way down the page (38), then below a short rule there are printed six lines, as follows:

"Letheon." Lest any one should object to this term, used at the beginning of this pamphlet, I would observe, that it is only used to avoid circumlocution. The same idea might be conveyed differently: as, for instance, "A process for the prevention of pain in surgical operations"; but the name given to the discovery in question answers the same purpose, and has the further recommendation of brevity.

*Portrait:* The drawing of Morton made by W. Hudson, Jr., and lithographed by J. H. Peirce occurs only in this, the first edition of the tract, and because of its quality and rarity it has been used as the frontispiece for this catalogue.

*Copies:* CtY-MHi (Dr. Cushing's copy, without wrappers); Clendening; MBM.



SOME ACCOUNT  
OF  
THE LETHRON;

OR,  
WHO WAS THE DISCOVERER?

---

BY EDWARD WARREN.

---

**Boston:**  
DUTTON AND WENTWORTH, PRINTERS,  
No. 37, Congress Street.  
1847.







Wm J. H. Norton

Sharp, Peirce & Co's, Lith. Boston.



## WHO WAS THE DISCOVERER?

---

GALIGNANI'S MESSENGER of Feb. 18th contains a letter from Dr. Horace Wells, of Hartford, Conn., then in Paris, in which he claims to be the original discoverer of the fact, that the vapor of sulphuric ether, taken into the lungs, will produce insensibility to pain. Here, certainly, nothing is thought of these absurd pretensions, or only thought of to be ridiculed; but, lest any should be misled in this matter, I herewith submit a copy of a letter from him to Dr. William T. G. Morton, the real discoverer, written before the idea of laying claim to the discovery in question entered his head—an idea which was altogether an after-thought. The communications published in the New York Journal of Commerce, and used by Dr. Wells, in Paris, were written by a medical gentleman who had heard Dr. W.'s story, and who honestly believed it. If Dr. Wells wishes to maintain his claims to his pretended discovery, that nitrous oxide gas will produce insensibility to pain, no one thinks to deprive him of the credit; most certainly the discoverer of the new application of sulphuric ether does not. But this letter will speak for itself:—

“HARTFORD, (Conn.) Oct. 20, 1846.

DR. MORTON:

DEAR SIR,—Your letter, dated yesterday, is just received, and I hasten to answer it, for fear you will adopt a method, in disposing of your rights, which will defeat your object. Before you make any arrangements whatever, I wish to see you. I think I will be in Boston the first of next week—probably Monday night. If the operation of administering the gas is not attended with too much trouble, and will produce the effect you state, it will, undoubtedly, be a fortune to you, provided it is rightly managed.

Yours, in haste,

H. WELLS.”

But, corroborative of what I have said above, and showing where the medical faculty of Boston bestow the honor of this great discovery, I will give the following note from Dr. Warren, the distinguished surgeon :—

“BOSTON, Jan 6th, 1847.

I hereby declare and certify, to the best of my knowledge and recollection, that I never heard of the use of sulphuric ether, by inhalation, as a means of preventing the pain of surgical operations, until it was suggested by Dr. W. T. G. Morton, in the latter part of October, 1846.

JOHN C. WARREN,

*Professor of Anatomy, and Surgeon of the Mass. Gen'l Hospital.*”

I would also submit the following notes, which go, as I conceive, to show who was known as the discoverer of the Lethæon. They bear date only two or three weeks after Dr. Morton made the first successful experiment, in performing a painless operation, ever published to the world, or ever performed by similar means. The earliest of these is as follows :—

“BOSTON, Oct. 17th, 1846.

I hereby certify that I have twice seen the administration of Dr. Morton's application for the prevention of pain; that it had a decided effect in preventing the sufferings of the patients during the operation, and that no bad consequences resulted.

J. C. WARREN.”

The next in order of date is here submitted :—

“On Saturday last, at the Hospital, I removed a tumor from the arm of a patient, who had immediately before inhaled something prepared by Dr. Morton, of this city. The operation lasted seven minutes; the patient gave no indication of suffering. She assured me afterwards, that she did not suffer, nor has she, to the present time, experienced any inconvenience from the inhalation.

GEO. HAYWARD.

*Tuesday, Oct. 20th, 1846.”*

The next and last I shall give, dated two days later, is as follows :—

“I certify that I assisted in the administration of Dr. Morton's Preparation to two patients, operated upon by Drs. Warren and Hayward at the Mass. General Hospital, on the 16th and 17th of October; that, under its influence, both these individuals submitted to operations, lasting from five to ten minutes, without suffering, and that they speedily recovered from its effects.

C. F. HAYWARD,

*House Surgeon Mass. General Hospital.*”

*October 22d, 1846.*

In a statement of this discovery, drawn up by Dr. J. C. Warren, and published in the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal, on December 9th, 1846, is the following: "Application has been made to me by R. H. Eddy, Esq., in a letter dated November 30, in behalf of Dr. W. T. G. Morton, to furnish an account of the operations witnessed and performed by me, wherein *his new discovery for preventing pain* was employed. Dr. M. has also proposed to me to give him the names of such hospitals as I know of in this country, in order that he may present them with the use of *his discovery*."

And again in the same paper:—

"Two or three days after these occurrences, on meeting with Dr. Charles T. Jackson, distinguished for his philosophical spirit of inquiry, as well as for his geological and chemical science, this gentleman *informed me that he first suggested* to Dr. Morton the inspiration of ether, as a means of preventing the pain of operations on the teeth. He did not claim the invention of the apparatus, nor its *practical application*; for these, we are indebted to Dr. Morton."

He, Dr. J., claims only to have made a bare suggestion of the fact, that ether could be used in alleviating pain. But, as will appear in the affidavits of Dr. G. G. Hayden, Wm. P. Leavitt, Thos. R. Spear, Jr., and Francis Whitman, Dr. Morton had been making constant experiments for months before, with sulphuric ether, and only went to Dr. Jackson to procure a retort, or other apparatus, to aid him in his inquiries. If Dr. Jackson spoke of ether, it will be observed that Dr. Morton called on him at the time the suggestion was made, for the very purpose of making inquiries as to its effects on an India-rubber bag; and, as I have already said, to procure some kind of apparatus from his laboratory, from which ether might be administered. Had Dr. Jackson made the discovery in question, why did he not give it to the world, and not endeavor, clandestinely, to wrest from Dr. Morton one in which he (Dr. J.) had no more share than many others? Dr. M. arrived at his discovery by the best process in the world—an inductive one—and he is indebted to Dr. J. no more than to several others from whom he derived like accidental hints. The initiative was not made by Dr. Jackson. He did not come to Dr. Morton's office and request him to bring out a discovery that had been already elaborated by another. He never talked of any great blessing that he was soon to bestow upon the afflicted of his race. On the contrary, after weeks and even months of patient, persevering labor in making experiments,

during which he gave up his business to another, let his practice suffer, and often endangered his health and very life; and when hope had dawned upon his mind, and he could exclaim, "I have it;" when the greatness of his wonderful discovery seemed to have taken possession of his whole soul, and was, in part, apprehended by his keen, inquiring intellect; after going to several distinguished philosophical instrument-makers, Mr. Wightman, of Cornhill, and others, to aid him in an apparatus; after all this, Dr. Morton went at last to Dr. Jackson,—not to ask him what would prevent pain in surgical operations, for that he seems to have been already in possession of,—but to borrow from his laboratory some instrument to assist him in making his agent available. Thus all, even Dr. J.'s best friends must admit, that the initiative in this great matter was taken, not by Dr. Jackson, but by Dr. Morton; and to him future ages will ascribe the honor, and on his head lavish out their blessings for the discovery, so long as misery and suffering are known to man!

Dr. Jackson has an unfortunate *mania* for appropriating to himself the discoveries of others,—a kind of *idiosyncrasy*,—which detracts very much from his great merits as a scientific man. For, by wishing to deprive others of the merit that really belongs to them, he injures his claim upon what is justly his own. A most unfortunate *contre-temps*, of this nature, was the affair of claiming the electro-magnetic telegraph. In a note signed by him, and published in the Boston Daily Advertiser, of the 8th March, he says:—"Those who know me, I confidently believe, can never suspect me of *wishing to appropriate a discovery which is not my own*;" the last clause of which I have italicized. Now, if this be so, how is it that Dr. J. so often gets into controversies with other discoverers? Whence originated the disputes about the electro-magnetic telegraph, gun cotton, &c. &c. of which the public have heard so much during the last ten years? But I will not go into these matters in detail, contenting myself with a brief history of the discovery of the telegraph. And, so far as this goes to substantiate Dr. J.'s assertion above, I will freely concede it to him.

In 1832, Dr. Jackson, Prof. Samuel F. B. Morse, Hon. William C. Rives, (then on his return from the embassy to France,) and Joshua Fisher, Esq., of Philadelphia, were fellow-passengers on board the ship Sully, commanded by Capt. Pell, returning to the United States. In a general conversation amongst these gentlemen, the then recent

discovery of obtaining the spark from the magnet was the subject, in which conversation allusion was made by Dr. Jackson to the experiments of Franklin across the Schuylkill River, and along its banks. This allusion was made to satisfy the question asked by one of the party, whether, in a distance occupied by the coil of the magnet, (some hundreds of feet,) there was not an appreciable interval of time in the passage of the electricity. This distance, at that time, was deemed very great. Dr. Jackson alluded to Franklin's experiments, to show that there was no appreciable time in the passage of the electricity. This experiment of Dr. Franklin must have been familiar to Prof. Morse from his youth, as it is to every person of even ordinary reading; but it was thus brought up to his recollection, and the idea of the possibility of making electricity the means of communicating intelligence at a distance at once flashed across his mind, and, in his remark upon the fact, he observed that *he thought it would not be difficult to construct a system of signs by which intelligence might be sent by electricity*. This was the first thought of his telegraph, which he immediately proceeded to carry into execution; and the plan now in successful operation was elaborated, in all its essential characteristics, before the close of the voyage. Dr. J. had nothing to do with any part of it, nor did he give a single available hint which has been used in any portion of Prof. Morse's invention.

A correspondence between those parties, on the subject of this invention, commenced from the following circumstance:—Prof. Morse had completed his invention in its practical parts, and, in 1836–7, had it in operation; and, two or three months afterwards, the first announcement of the European telegraph was made in the papers of the United States. To secure to himself and the country the honor of priority, he wrote to the captain of the ship, to Mr. Rives, to Mr. Fisher, and to Dr. Jackson, for their testimony to the fact, that he invented the telegraph on board the ship Sully, in 1832. All but Dr. Jackson freely gave this testimony, (which may be found in Vail's larger work on the telegraph, pages 152, 153,) but, instead of according his testimony, he surprised Prof. Morse, in *his answer*, by laying claim to be *mutually interested* (mark this) in the invention. In 1839, while Prof. Morse was abroad in France, Dr. Jackson had the courage—shall I call it?—not only to claim to be the *solo inventor* of the telegraph, in a publication made in the Boston Post, but he also sent a communication to the Academy of Sciences in Paris, in which he made the same claim, but of which latter fact Prof. Morse knew nothing, as I am



informed, till about a year since. He, Dr. Jackson, referred, for evidence in his favor, to the master of the ship, Capt. Pell, to Hon. Mr. Rives, and to Mr. Fisher. On Prof. M.'s return from Europe, in 1839, he at once publicly called on Dr. Jackson, in the Boston Post, either to retract or substantiate his claims. To this challenge, made seven years ago, he has never replied.

The gentlemen, to whom he referred, each wrote Prof. Morse, it appears, recognizing him only in the invention, and one of them expressing the greatest indignation that Dr. Jackson should have appealed to him in a matter where it was so notorious, on board the ship, that Prof. Morse only had the least claim to the invention.

Such is a brief, but, it is believed, a correct history of this affair. And the striking analogy between this history and the controversy now going on respecting the discovery of the Letheon, will be most obvious. In the first place, from 1832 to 1839, Dr. Jackson seems to have thought his share in the invention,—or the invention itself,—of so little importance, as to pay no attention to the subject *during seven years*, and then only, when another and a most meritorious man had brought it to great perfection and into extensive use, when he steps forward and claims to be *mutually* interested in the invention. Not content with this, however, he next claims to be the *sole* inventor. And, to substantiate his claims, he sent, in 1839, to an American gentleman, then in Paris, a statement, directed to M. Elie de Beaumont, to be laid before the French Academy! In like manner, in the face of the most positive assurances to the contrary, after Dr. Morton had given to the world the discovery by which painless operations may be performed in surgery, Dr. Jackson privately forwarded to the same M. Elie de Beaumont his claims to be considered the sole discoverer in this matter, and that, too, after he had, for some weeks, as is well known, clearly and distinctly denounced the whole thing as a “humbug.”

And here, I wish to point out two or three statements of Dr. Jackson's, made public, going to show how little he really knew of, or had reflected upon, the effects of ether on the system, and how little importance he attached to his knowledge of the discovery which he claims to have kept so long from the world. In a letter, dated January 6th, 1847, and published in the Journal of Commerce, he says:—“I would also beg leave to call attention to the fact, that the effect of highly rectified ether vapor, when inhaled in the manner employed in

this city, does not act *as an excitant*, but *as a sedative* of a most decided character, diminishing the pulsation of the arteries, and producing a deep sleep or stupor." In his communication, improperly addressed to the American Academy, he says:—"We are aware, that ether ranks in the pharmaceutic books and dispensatories, as a *diffusible stimulant*, and that its fumes or vapor produce intoxication of a short duration." And in a letter of his, now before me, he says:—"He" (a person before alluded to in this letter,) "imagines the effect to be merely excitant, or *intoxication*, while no such effect is produced by the application of ether vapor, such as we use in this city,"—a statement, which seems to contradict the one above, in which it is said, that it *does* produce intoxication.

These passages are quoted to show, that Dr. Jackson really had no more knowledge of the effects and operation of ether upon the system, than was shared in common with the whole medical world.

And now, I come to a matter, which I would pass over in silence, did not stern justice require that it should be set right. On Monday morning, the first of March, Dr. Jackson published a statement in the Boston Daily Advertiser, purporting to have come from, and received the sanction of, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. The same day at noon, the British steamer sailed, bearing to Europe a large number of papers containing this statement, apparently with the additional sanction of the names of Dr. Warren and President Everett. Now these gentlemen, being desirous of having a scientific account of the discovery in question furnished to the world, and believing that no person was more competent than Dr. Jackson to draw up such an account, addressed to him the notes bearing their names, little thinking that he was to make use of them to aid him in passing off upon the public a statement most erroneous and unfair, and calculated to do much injustice to a very meritorious and deserving man.

On Tuesday evening following the publication of this paper, the Academy had an informal meeting, at which Dr. Jackson was present, and presented a paper, already far on its way to Europe, bearing the fraudulent stamp of the Academy! This, Dr. Jackson read, and made a motion to have it printed, which was declined by the members of that learned body, and the Doctor rather severely catechised for making public a statement, as coming from them, which they had never before seen, or heard of. What his surprise was, at the reception his paper and the course he had pursued in relation to its publication met with,

those present only know, and others must surmise! It is understood, that the Academy are about to publish a disclaimer to this fraud or forgery, and to show, that they are not to be used to foist on the public an erroneous, or rather materially false, statement.

And it may be asked why Dr. Jackson has been known in the discovery at all, when he really rendered no essential aid in making it, and when, after Dr. Morton had brought it out, he so carefully and particularly repudiated it, and declared, distinctly, that he had nothing to do with it, nor was responsible for its effects. To this very natural inquiry I reply, that Dr. Morton associated Dr. Jackson with him in the affair, at the earnest request and on the advice of the friends of both parties, in order that he might avail himself of the great scientific attainments of the latter in perfecting the arrangements necessary properly to bring his discovery into general use. At first, Dr. Jackson claimed no part of the invention, rather disclaiming the whole; and after it had been several weeks before the public, he only demanded the trifling sum of *five hundred dollars* for his whole interest in the thing, and was subsequently contented to be named simply as joint discoverer, in the Letters Patent, as a full remuneration for his advice and trouble in what had been done. This is the whole secret of Dr. Jackson's share in the discovery under discussion, all of which we shall be able to show by the best proof possible, namely, by Dr. J.'s own friends themselves, or by the one who was principally instrumental in bringing it about.

And I would not conclude this paper without alluding to a person, who has been, from the first, most active in making Dr. Morton's discovery known. I refer to Dr. JOHN C. WARREN. Since the great blessing in question was given to the public, he has resigned his connection with the Medical School. In his valedictory, on this occasion, he says:—"And here he might notice the invaluable means of preventing pain in surgical operations—a discovery which every medical man, and especially every practical surgeon, must hail with unmingled satisfaction." As it was before this school that he had often alluded to this discovery, defended it against hasty inconsiderate attacks, pointed out its vast importance, and thus given it his high sanction and aided in conferring it upon the world, so there was it most appropriate that, in summing up the work, which for a long term of years he had accomplished, he should thus have it in his power to say that he had added this new but crowning blessing to his labors. How



appropriate that he should close his connexion with the Medical School, by aiding in the introduction of "this last best gift to man!"

---

DR. G. G. HAYDEN:

DEAR SIR,—Being about to prepare a brief history of the discovery recently given to the world, by which operations in surgery are rendered painless, I will thank you, in the name of a matter of great public interest, to furnish me with such information, in an authentic form, as may aid me in my researches.

Respectfully, your obt. servt.

EDW. WARREN.

*Boston, March 24, 1847.*

---

EDW. WARREN, Esq.:

DEAR SIR,—I have received your note, asking me to furnish you with a statement of what I know respecting the discovery whereby painless operations are performed in surgery, and, in compliance therewith, and in order to subserve the cause of truth and justice, I take pleasure in placing at your disposal the following account.

Respectfully, your obt. servt.

GRENVILLE G. HAYDEN.

*Boston, March 24, 1847.*

---

BOSTON, MARCH 25, 1847.

I, *Grenville G. Hayden*, of Boston, in the county of Suffolk, and State of Massachusetts, dentist, on oath, depose and say,—

That, about the *last of June, 1846*, Dr. William T. G. Morton called upon me at my office, No. 23, Tremont Row, and stated to me that he wished to make some arrangements with me that would relieve him from all care as to the superintendence of those employed by him in making teeth, and all other matters in his office. He stated, as a reason for urging me to superintend his affairs in his office, that he had an idea in his head, connected with dentistry, which he thought "would be one of the greatest things ever known," and that he wished to perfect it and give his whole time and attention to its development. Being extremely urgent in the matter, I made an engagement with him the same day, according to his request. I then asked him what his "*secret*" was. "Oh," said he, "you will know in a short time." I still insisted upon knowing it, and he finally told me the same night, to wit, the *night of the last day of June, 1846*, aforesaid, that "*it*

*was something he had discovered which would enable him to extract teeth without pain.*" I then asked him if it was not what Dr. Wells, his former partner, had used, and he replied "No! *nothing like it;*" and, furthermore, "*that it was something that neither he, nor any one else, had ever used.*" He then told me he had already *tried it upon a dog*, and described its effects upon him, which (from his description) exactly correspond with the effects of ether upon persons who have subjected themselves to its influence, under my observation. All this happened in June, 1846. He then requested me not to mention what he had communicated to me.

About a *month* after this, about the first of August, 1846, Dr. Morton asked me where he could get some pure ether, and asked me to go to Joseph Burnett's apothecary shop, and purchase a 4-ounce vial full of ether, which he said he wished to carry home with him, he being about to leave town for Needham, where he then resided. And about the same time he explained to me the nature and effects of ether, and told me that, if he could get any patient to inhale a certain quantity of ether gas, it would *cause insensibility to the pain of extracting teeth*, and he tried to induce me to take it. Dr. Morton said he had breathed it himself, and it would do no harm; and he at the same time tried to induce three young men in the office to take the gas. *This was in August, 1846.* He was continually talking about his discovery to me. From the time I engaged with Dr. M. as afore-said, he frequently stated to me that he had nearly perfected every department in dentistry, save *extracting teeth without pain*, and that he was *determined to accomplish that also*. But towards the last of September following, he intimated to me that, in some particulars, his discovery did not work exactly right, and, in my presence, was consulting his books to ascertain something *further* about ether.

Upon this, I recommended him to consult some chemist on the subject. Dr. Morton then sent Francis Whitman to see if Dr. Jackson was at home, but Francis returned, and said that Dr. J. was not at home. The next day, however, which was about the last of September, 1846, Dr. M. said that he had that day seen Dr. Jackson, and derived from him a hint by which Dr. M. thought he could remove the only remaining difficulty. Dr. M. said that, in his interview with Jackson, the subject of nitrous oxide gas and of ether gas, and atmospheric air, was freely talked of, as having an effect on the imagination of the patient, and various experiments which had been tried with these gases

on students at Cambridge colleges ; also the experiments of Dr. Wells and himself together, with the nitrous oxide gas ; but that Dr. Morton withheld from Dr. Jackson the fact that he had been experimenting on either gas before. The same day, Dr. Morton told me that he had just tried ether again—in accordance with Jackson's hint—on himself, and that he had remained insensible seven or eight minutes, by the watch.

The first successful experiment upon any patient was made September 30th, 1846, by inhaling ether through a folded cloth, and on that occasion a tooth was extracted without pain. We tried repeated experiments with the same means subsequently, and they all resulted in total failures. Dr. M. said that Dr. Jackson recommended certain apparatus, which he lent Dr. Morton from his laboratory, consisting of a glass tube of equal size through, having a neck, and being about three feet long. This was likewise a total failure. So far, all our experiments, *with one exception*, proving abortive, we found that a different apparatus must be obtained, and it was at this time that Dr. M. procured, from Mr. Wightman, of Cornhill, a conical glass tube, with which, by inserting a sponge saturated with ether in the larger end, we had better success, and our experiments began to assume a more promising aspect.

Still, our success was not uniform, and far from perfect. At this time Dr. M. suggested that our failures might be owing to the fact that, in all our experiments so far, the patient had breathed the expired vapor back into the vessel, thus inhaling the same over and over. He then stated that the expired air should pass off into the surrounding atmosphere, and wished me to make a pattern for an apparatus, by which the air should pass into the vessel, combine with the ether, be inhaled into the lungs, and the expired air thrown off into the room. The idea, as thus forced upon him, and communicated to me, was fully elaborated, and corresponds most accurately with the apparatus now in use in this country and in Europe, and for which Dr. M. has applied for Letters Patent. I replied, that he had explained his idea so clearly that he would have no difficulty in directing a philosophical instrument maker to manufacture a proper inhaler at once, without a pattern, and recommended to him Mr. Chamberlain, in School Street, to whom he applied accordingly, and who made, as thus desired, the first inhaler. And with such an apparatus, we have had almost uniform success to this day, the results of which are known to the world.

And I will here state that, on the evening of the 30th of September, after the first experiment had been made with success, Dr. Morton spoke about going to the Hospital and using the ether there, and thus bring out the new discovery. After several other successful experiments, the question came up anew, how to introduce it to the world, when Dr. M. stated, that Dr. Jackson had declined to countenance it, or aid in bringing it out, and then he (Dr. M.,) said he would see Dr. Warren, and have his discovery introduced into the Massachusetts General Hospital. He went out and soon returned, stating that Dr. W. had agreed to afford him an opportunity to apply the vapor, as soon as practicable, in the Hospital.

For more than four weeks after our first experiment, it was well understood, and often spoken of in the office, that Dr. Jackson repudiated all share, pretence of, or interest in, the discovery. He was never in Dr. M.'s office during all our experiments, to my knowledge, until the 21st of October, and I never knew that Dr. M. advised with Dr. J. as much as with many others, or in fact but once.

GRENVILLE G. HAYDEN.

---

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

SUFFOLK, ss.

March 30th, 1847.

Sworn to before me,

WILLIAM WHITING,

Justice of the Peace.

---

Boston, March 25, 1847.

I, *William P. Leavitt*, of Boston, in the county of Suffolk, and State of Massachusetts, on oath, depose and say,—

That, about one week after Dr. Hayden came to practise dentistry in connexion with Dr. Morton, with whom I was then a student, that is to say, about the *first of July*, 1846, Dr. Morton stepped into his back office, much excited, and exclaimed, with great animation, (as nearly as I can recollect his language), “*I have got it now! &c. I shall take my patients into the front room and extract their teeth, and then take them into the back office and put in a new set, and send them off without their knowing any thing about the operation!!*”

Some days after this, about the *first of AUGUST*, 1846, Dr. M.

asked Dr. Hayden where he (Dr. Morton) could get some *very nice* PURE ETHER. Dr. H. recommended him to send to Brewer, Stevens & Co. Dr. Morton then called me out behind the screen, and requested me to go down to Brewer, Stevens & Co.'s, and get him some PURE ETHER. He told me to keep every thing to myself. He said he wished me to be careful not to let them know who it was for, or where I was from or was going to. I then bought some ether; told them it was to be sent out of town, and requested them to make out the bill in the name of some person in the country—whom, I don't now recollect.

I brought the ether home and gave it to Dr. Morton. A short time after this, he requested me to call on Dr. Gay, and ask him if *ether would dissolve India-rubber*, as he wanted to put some ether into an India-rubber bottle or bag. I went to call, but could not find his residence. I returned and said so to Dr. M. the next morning.

About a week after this, Dr. Morton told me that, if I would find a man who would have a tooth extracted, and have an experiment tried upon him, which was perfectly harmless, he would give me five dollars, and he sent me out with Thos. R. Spear, Jr., for that purpose. We went down to the wharves and spoke to a number of persons; but they declined coming; so that, after some time, we returned without bringing any one with us. Dr. Morton then asked me to try it; but I refused. He then said that *he had taken it*, and that it was perfectly harmless, and that he wanted some one else to take it, that he might see how it operated. Dr. Hayden said, Tom will take it; but he said no, he had no teeth he wished extracted. But he finally said "I will take some, won't you?" We both took it the same evening, inhaling it from a handkerchief. Thomas took it first, and I stood by him. He seemed to fall nearly asleep, so that he dropped the handkerchief; and, when he was coming to himself, he was very much excited, so that I was obliged to hold him in the chair. When he came to, he seemed perfectly delighted with the sensations he had experienced—so much so, that he could not find language to express himself. He then persuaded me to inhale it. I told him I would if he would leave the room, as he did, when I took it with much the same effects.

WM. P. LEAVITT.

---

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

SUFFOLK, SS.

Sworn to before me,

March 30th, 1847.

WILLIAM WHITING,

Justice of the Peace.



BOSTON, March 25, 1847.

I, *Thomas R. Spear, Jr.*, of Boston, in the State of Massachusetts, depose and say,—

That, about the first of August, 1846, at request of Dr. Morton, I inhaled a portion of ether, which William P. Leavitt brought from Brewer, Stevens & Co., in a demijohn, in Dr. Morton's office. The rest of the young men in the office were afraid to take it; but, having taken what I supposed to be the same before, at the Lexington Academy, I did not hesitate to take it when I learned what it was.

About a week after the ether was purchased of Brewer, Stevens & Co., Dr. Morton was expecting some persons at his office to witness an experiment, and he then offered me a sum of money if I would *be present* and inhale the ether. I went home and consulted my parents, and they advised me not to go. I have often heard Dr. M. say, that when he had completed his invention for *extracting teeth without pain*, he should be satisfied.

Ever after Dr. Hayden came into the office, Dr. Morton seemed wholly absorbed in making this discovery, and had a number of bottles, an India-rubber bottle, &c., &c., with which he prosecuted his experiments in the little room adjoining the front office, where he frequently locked himself in.

Dr. Morton offered me five dollars if I would get some one to come into the office and to have an experiment tried upon him, of having a tooth extracted, while under the operation of gas. I went, accordingly, down to the wharves, in company with Wm. P. Leavitt, in order to get some one for this purpose, but did not get any one to have the experiment tried upon.

THOMAS R. SPEAR, JR.

---

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

SUFFOLK, SS.

March 30th, 1847.

Sworn to before me,

WILLIAM WHITING,

Justice of the Peace.

BOSTON, MARCH 25, 1847.

I, *Francis Whitman*, of Boston, in the county of Suffolk, and State of Massachusetts, student at dentistry, on oath, depose and say,—

That I have often heard Dr. Morton speak about discovering some means of extracting teeth without pain. This discovery appeared to be the subject of his thoughts and investigations during the greater part of last year, *i. e.* 1846. One day, I think it was *previous to July, 1846*, Dr. M., in speaking of the improvements he had made in his profession, and of some one improvement in particular, said, if he could only extract teeth without pain, he “would make a stir.” I replied, that I hardly thought it could be done. He said, he believed it could, and that he *would find out* something yet to accomplish his purpose.

In conversation with Dr. M., some time in July, he spoke of having his patients come in at one door, having all their teeth extracted without pain and without knowing it, and then going into the next room, and having a full set put in.

I recollect Dr. Morton came into the office one day in great glee, and exclaimed, that he had “FOUND IT!” and that he *could extract teeth WITHOUT PAIN!!* I don’t recollect what followed; but, soon after, he wanted one of us in the office to try it, and he then sent William and Thomas out to hire a man to come in and have an experiment tried upon him. After all these circumstances happened, Dr. Hayden advised Dr. Morton to consult with some chemist in relation to this discovery. I went, at Dr. Morton’s request, to see if Dr. Jackson had returned, (he having been absent from the city,) but found that he was still absent.

I told Dr. Morton I knew what it was that William had bought, and said it was chloric of ether. Dr. M. then said, he wished to know if ether would dissolve India-rubber, and sent William P. Leavitt to inquire of Dr. Gay, if it would.

About this time, Dr. M. asked me to get the books on chemistry, and find what they said about ether. I did so, and read it over to him, and I think he went to Burnett’s to see if he could not find something there.

After the first announcement of the discovery in the papers, I went to Dr. Jackson’s, and he spoke to me of some notices in the papers; but immediately after said, he did not “care how much Dr. M. advertised, *if his own name was not drawn in with it.*” A week or two after this conversation, I was at Dr. Jackson’s, when he asked me how we got along with the gas. I told him that we got along first-rate.

He then said, he “did not know how it would work *in pulling teeth*, but knew its effects at college upon the students, when the faculty had to get a certificate from a physician, *that it was injurious*, to prevent them from using it;” but that he “did not know how it would operate in pulling teeth.”

FRANCIS WHITMAN.

---

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

SUFFOLK, SS.

March 30th, 1847.

Sworn to before me,

WILLIAM WHITING,

Justice of the Peace.

---

The following “History,” appended to an account of some of the cases in which the vapor has been used in the Massachusetts General Hospital, was prepared by that rising, and already eminent surgeon, J. MASON WARREN. In this history, by one who has been conversant with all the facts connected with the discovery, and who has been most active in bringing it before the world, it is stated, that “Dr. Warren met Dr. Charles T. Jackson, *who informed him*, that he suggested the use of ether to Dr. Morton.” A similar statement was published, by Dr. J. C. Warren, in the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal, of Dec. 9th, 1846. And this seems to be about all that they, or the other eminent surgeons and physicians, Dr. Hayward, Dr. Bigelow, Dr. Gould and others, who have been so prominent in introducing the discovery to the public, know, respecting Dr. Jackson’s claims or agency in the matter; he *informed* them as to what he had done, or rather *said*; for he does not profess ever to have *done* any thing.

If I am accused of espousing this cause warmly, I reply, that I did not do so until I had seen Dr. Jackson’s letters to the French Academy, and his statement, published in the Daily Advertiser, in which he *affects to recognize no one in the discovery*, but claims the *sole honor* as his own! The most glaring injustice thus done to Dr. Morton seems to require equally prompt treatment.

“HISTORY” OF THE DISCOVERY.

BY J. MASON WARREN.

*From the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal of March 24th, 1847.*

Having been conversant with the principal facts relating to the introduction of the inhalation of ether into surgical operations, it may not be considered



inappropriate to connect, with the above cases, a slight sketch of their early history, so far as I am acquainted with them.

In the early part of October, 1846, Dr. W. T. G. Morton called at the house of Dr. J. C. Warren, and stated to him that he was in possession of a means for preventing pain in surgical operations, and that he should be glad to have the application made by Dr. W. in a surgical case. Having made some inquiry as to its safety and mode of exhibition, this gentleman agreed to afford him the earliest opportunity for employing it.

A few days after, on October 13th, a patient at the Massachusetts General Hospital, having to undergo an operation for removal of a tumor of the neck, was brought into the operating theatre, all the arrangements made for the operation, and Dr. Warren was about to begin, when he arrested his hand, saying—"I now recollect, that I promised Dr. Morton to give him the earliest opportunity of trying a mode for preventing pain in surgical operations, and if the patient consents, I shall defer this operation to another day, and invite Dr. M. to administer his application." The patient consenting, the operation was accordingly postponed to the following Friday, October 16th, and Dr. W. having requested the house surgeon to invite the attendance of Dr. Morton, that gentleman was present, and made the first application of the inhalation of ether.

On the following day, a patient requiring the removal of a tumor from the arm, and being rendered insensible by Dr. Morton's application, Dr. Warren requested Dr. Hayward, who was present, to perform the operation.

A few days subsequent to this, Dr. Warren met Dr. Charles T. Jackson, who informed him, that he had suggested the use of the ether to Dr. Morton.

On Nov. 6th, Dr. Morton addressed a letter to Dr. Warren, to be communicated to the surgeons of the Hospital, in which he professed himself ready to disclose the composition of this agent to them, and also to permit as liberal a use of it as was reasonable under existing circumstances.

On the following day, it was exhibited to a young woman, who was to submit to an amputation of the leg, by Dr. Hayward; being the first amputation performed under the use of ether. At the same time, Dr. Warren operated on a female, for the removal of a portion of the lower jaw. In both these cases, the inhalation was quite successful, but most perfectly in the amputation.

On November 9th, Dr. H. J. Bigelow read a paper on this subject to the Boston Society for Medical Improvement, which he had previously read before the Academy of Sciences.

On December 3d, Dr. Warren communicated, to the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal, an account of the first surgical operations under the ethereal inhalation.

The preceding operations at the Hospital, by Drs. Warren and Hayward, were followed by a variety performed by the other surgeons of that institution,

Drs. Townsend, Parkman, H. J. Bigelow, and myself. Among them may be mentioned the reduction of two dislocations of the humerus, by Dr. Parkman, one of which was easily managed without having recourse to the ordinary powerful apparatus.

To these in the Hospital, succeeded operations in private practice, by myself, the above-mentioned gentlemen, Dr. Peirson, of Salem, and, at length, in various parts of the country.

In Europe, it has been received with the greatest enthusiasm. Amputations of the limbs and breasts, the removal of stone in the bladder, and the Cæsarean section, have been performed, all with immunity from pain; it has even been given to mitigate the sufferings of labor without arresting the contractions of the uterus.

The most striking part of the history of this valuable remedy remains to be mentioned; which is, that, notwithstanding the general and almost indiscriminate use of a means apparently so powerful in its nature, not a single case has thus far been recorded, in which it has produced fatal consequences. It is to be hoped, therefore, that, by a better experience in its use—an experience we shall soon be able to obtain from the examples constantly afforded—it may be rendered as safe as any other article of the *materia medica*.

As was to have been expected, various claimants have arisen for the honor of the discovery, and one or two persons in France have certainly approximated very closely to it—without having carried their investigations, however, to a sufficient length to render any practical benefit to humanity. A consent almost unanimous, both in England and France, has conceded this honor to our fellow-townsmen, Dr. W. T. G. Morton and Dr. Charles T. Jackson.

---

WM. T. G. MORTON, the fortunate discoverer of a means of annihilating so vast an amount of human suffering, was born in the town of Charlton, in Worcester county, in the State of Massachusetts. He is still a young man, being but about twenty-seven, although few men, even in a long life, have been able to accomplish so much for humanity. Like most New England boys, he was, at an early age, thrown upon his own resources, to work out his destiny as he might. Wherever placed, however, he seems to have been equal to the emergency, always exhibiting the most extraordinary mental activity with great diligence and perseverance. Having chosen dentistry for his profession, and determined that no one should excel him in his business, he at once bent the whole powers of his mind to his calling, and pursued it with a zeal which could but ensure success.

On arriving at a maturer age, and wishing to give a greater range to his mind, he commenced the study of medicine in the office of Dr.

*Charles T. Jackson*, and entered his name, as a student of medicine and practical anatomy, in the Massachusetts Medical College, where he manifested his usual energy of character in the prosecution of his studies, and particularly in anatomy. Having continued in attendance at this institution during two courses of lectures, he closed his connection with it, and returned fully to his profession, to which he has since devoted himself with the greatest assiduity.

Content with no common success in his business, he aspired to reach the head of the profession he had chosen, and, therefore, sought to make such improvements in the mechanical, as well as other departments, as would render his establishment one of the most perfect to be found. And, with what results his labors have been crowned, his numerous patients can testify. Soon after his return to his business, having many orders for whole sets of teeth, which required that many others should first be extracted, it became a matter of great moment with him to devise some means of reducing the pain attendant on such operations, in order to induce his patients to submit to them. And, at length, after having often spoken of his desire to discover such an agent, the great necessity of finding some way to mitigate pain was forced upon him still more strongly by a refractory patient, who fully declared that she would have nothing done unless she could first be put into such a state as that no pain would be felt from the operation. This induced him to redouble his efforts and inquiries, and led him finally to make the fortunate and brilliant DISCOVERY which has crowned his researches with such signal triumph and success! He had now reached the *Ultima Thule* of his hopes and expectations, and conferred upon his race, and the world, a blessing, the extent of which few seem adequately to have estimated.

As was to be expected, this piece of good fortune, on the part of Dr. Morton, awakened the envy and excited the jealousy of some of his professional brethren. Among these, *Dr. J. F. Flagg* stands, and probably ever will stand, alone, in his "bad eminence." He at once commenced a terrible onslaught upon the new application of ether, and, more terrible still, upon the hapless discoverer! But not succeeding in his first attempts in crushing the young Hercules in its cradle, and the *eclat* of the thing still spreading, he at length excited his brother dentists to arouse and array themselves in order of battle. Accordingly, early in December, a meeting of dentists was called, a committee of seven—the *immortal seven*—with Dr. Flagg at its head, ap-

pointed, and measures taken to suppress the growing evil! In due time, Dr. Flagg and his brother committee-men brought out their great manifesto, which will remain an enduring monument to perpetuate their malice and envy.

The next dentist who has rendered a most essential service to his race, by exposing the dangers of Dr. Morton's discovery, is *Prof. A. Westcott*, now connected with a dental college in Baltimore. His opposition has been most energetic and persevering. From the first, he seems to have deemed it his duty to declare war, not merely against the use of ether itself, but also against the unfortunate Dr. Morton. In a published statement from this gentleman, is this sentence: "If he can make *me* believe that the indiscriminate application of this vapor is really so very harmless, he will make me believe that I am the richest man on earth. I should then certainly go in for the new patents I spoke of in my former communication. For who would not freely administer a harmless thing, especially when it is 'endorsed by the first surgeons and medical men in New England,' to stop the crying of cross babies? If the thing is really harmless, and the subjects, 'after breathing it from one half to two minutes, drop into a *quiet slumber*,' it certainly would be invaluable for nursery purposes. *Morton's sucking-bottles* would be in great requisition surely. I again affirm, that had Mrs. Caudle only acquired a taste for this luxury, her poor husband might have been, comparatively, a happy man."—This is a fair specimen of the learned Professor's logic and humor!

To leave the dental profession, we come to another class of persons who object no less stoutly to the use of ether. *Robert M. Huston, M. D.*, editor of the Philadelphia "Medical Examiner," puts in his veto in this wise:—"A certain Dr. Morton, a practising dentist in Boston, is advertising, in the newspapers of this city, that he has received a *patent* for what he calls 'his improvement,' whereby pain may be prevented in dentistical and surgical operations; and he now offers to sell 'licenses to use said improvement,' to dentists, surgeons, and other suitable persons. Looking upon this as nothing more nor less than a new scheme to tax the pockets of the enlightened public, we should not consider it entitled to the least notice, but that we perceive, by the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal, that prominent members of the profession in that city have been caught in its meshes." Again: "We are persuaded that the surgeons of Philadelphia will not be seduced from the high professional path of duty, into the quagmire of quackery,



by this Will-o'-the-wisp." And again: "We cannot close these remarks without again expressing our deep mortification and regret, that the eminent men, who have so long adorned the profession in Boston, should have consented for a moment to set so bad an example to their younger brethren, as we conceive them to have done in this instance. If such things are to be sanctioned by the profession, there is little need of reform conventions, or any other efforts to elevate the professional character: physicians and quacks will soon constitute one fraternity."

*William C. Roberts, M. D.*, editor of the New York "Annalist," thus states his objections:—"By-and-by we may see 'Morton's Antipathetic Inhalation' puffed in an article, to which shall be appended the honored names of Warren, Bigelow, and Pierson; and wherein, we ask, will it differ from the objectionable contributions of others, quite as high, to Swaim's Panacea?" In another place he says:—"The last special wonder has already arrived at the natural term of its existence, and the interest created by its first advent has, in a great measure, subsided. It has descended to the bottom of that great abyss, which has already engulfed so many of its predecessor novelties, but which continues, alas! to gape, until a humbug yet more prime shall be thrown into it." And again, this Solon says, in speaking of the use of ether in London:—"We regret to observe that Mr. Liston is so negligent of what is due to the dignity of his profession, and of his own duty as a member of it, as to have employed this patented nostrum."

*Charles A. Lee, M. D.*, editor of the New York "Journal of Medicine," says:—"We are sorry to see many of our brethren, at home and abroad, stooping from the exalted position they occupy in the profession, to hold intercourse with, and become the abettors of, quackery in any form. Such doings are certainly contrary to the ethics of the profession, and should not be tolerated for a moment in any one."

*Drs. W. M. Carpenter, E. D. Fenner, J. Harrison, and A. Hester*, editors of the New Orleans "Medical and Surgical Journal," father the following sentiment on this subject:—"That the leading surgeons of Boston could be captivated by *such an invention as this*, heralded to the world under the auspices of a *patent right*, and upon *such* evidences of utility and safety as are presented by Dr. Bigelow, excites our amazement. Why, *mesmerism*, which is repudiated by the *savans* of Boston, has done a thousand times greater wonders, and without any of the dangers here threatened. What shall we hear next?"

*Prof. D. T. Mütter*, of Philadelphia, has also to receive a share of the credit due to those who endeavored to suppress Dr. Morton's discovery in its youth. The chairman of a committee of Congress, to whom the matter was referred of introducing the use of the Letheon into the army and navy, addressed Prof. M. on the subject, asking him if it could be "*usefully* employed in the practice of surgery in the manner proposed by Dr. Morton." To this he replied:—"On this point, there is in my mind *not the slightest doubt*. I cannot consider any agent generally useful that unquestionably subjects the patient to the risk of *losing his life*." And, in another place, in his letter, he says:—"The peculiar method of Dr. Morton is, consequently, of no value, since others accomplish the same ends without the use of his patented apparatus. But granting that his measures are peculiar and even better than those of others, I trust the day is far distant when we shall find so distinguished a body as our national Congress, lending itself to the advancement of quackery, in any shape." And I have cited these passages in order that Prof. Mütter shall receive full credit for his sagacity and foresight, in thus pointing out the evils and dangers attending the use of the vapor.

Nor would I withhold from the editors of "*The American Journal and Library of Dental Science*," published in Baltimore,—*Drs. Chapin, A. Harris, Amos Westcott, and Edwin J. Dunning*,—the meed of praise that should be awarded them for their timely warning against the new monster! They say:—"Great interest has been excited, both in professional circles and in the public mind, by an announcement, in the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*, that a Mr. Morton, of Boston, has discovered a gaseous preparation of a nature so exquisitely anodyne as to fulfil the great desideratum in surgery." Also:—"The effects resulting from, or at least liable to result from, the inhalation of the vapor of sulphuric ether, are, in our opinion, more to be dreaded than the pain of almost any surgical operation. We would, therefore, caution our professional brethren against the use of an article capable of producing such sudden, powerful, and dangerous effects."

Thus has assault upon assault been made against this discovery, and sometimes, as in the case of Dr. Flagg, and the watchful "*Committee of Seven*," who may justly be denominated the *seven wise men of Boston*, it has been aimed at Dr. Morton personally and always coupling him with it. Indeed, praise and spleen have been lavished upon his

head, and on his discovery, in about equal proportions; but never, to any extent, has Dr. Jackson shared in this contumely and opprobrium. Oh no! he always took good care to keep his skirts clear of the sin of this monster, until the storm had, in a great measure, passed over, leaving Dr. Morton to fight the battle and receive the knocks, while he himself stood aloof, ready to rush in "at the death." He never raised his voice in the defence of the discovery; he was never considered the principal, nor, for some weeks, known at all in it; he has sustained no injury in his business and character; nor has he shared any of the odium heaped upon the head of Dr. M., but contented himself with denouncing the discovery as a "humbug," and saying he "did not care what was done with it if his name was not drawn in with it!"

The only object the writer has in this matter is, to serve the cause of truth and justice. He has no pecuniary interests whatever involved in the discussion, but aims simply to establish the right. It is admitted, on all hands, that a great blessing has been conferred upon the world; and the question recurs, Who is the discoverer? and, to settle this query satisfactorily and justly, is a matter of very great moment, else what inducement is there to ingenious minds to labor and wear themselves out in conferring favors upon mankind, when even the *credit* of the thing is wrested from them? It is a disgraceful historical fact, that almost all great discoverers and inventors have been robbed of all pecuniary advantage arising from their services; and in many, too many cases, alas! has the fame of their achievements also been suffered to be seized by others.

In this particular case, it is the boast of those who are inimical to its success, that it is free to all; that Dr. Morton has no legal rights peculiar to himself in the matter; and that all are using his invention who may choose! And this boast is made in America, over an American citizen, an enthusiastic, persevering young man, who has labored long, run great personal risks, suffered in his reputation, and been almost ruined in his professional business, to achieve and bring out a discovery which has already elevated the American name, and which shall add lustre to his native country "long after the dust of his enemies shall have been changed into vile worms!" The discoverer, therefore, is to derive no pecuniary benefit from his great achievement, even on the admission of those who oppose him; and now the question comes up, with still greater force, Shall the honor also be iniqui-

tously torn from him? Every young man, every great inventor or discoverer,—in fact, every one who is aiming at any human distinction whatever,—is concerned in a just and equitable adjustment of this question.

But, thanks to the cause of justice, we have it in our power, as we think, to furnish such additional evidence on this subject, as must, in the minds of all candid men, place the question beyond a doubt. This additional testimony shall be forthcoming in due time; and, until then, *we have to ask the public to suspend their decision*, assuring them that they shall not be kept long in doubt, if what we have to offer further shall be deemed conclusive, as we trust it will, in substantiating Dr. Morton's claims to the discovery.

---

*From the Boston Daily Advertiser of March 5th.*

#### THE DISCOVERY OF THE LETHEON.

MESSRS. EDITORS:—

Being about to prepare a communication in answer to the one signed by Charles T. Jackson, and published in your paper of March 1st, and finding that a friend had written such a statement, signed "E. W." which, so far as I have examined it, is correct, I have to request that the same may find a place in your columns.

I am now engaged in preparing a statement of my claims to the discovery of the Letheon, which, when ready, will be laid before the Academy of Arts and Sciences in this city, at its next sitting, and that too *before it has appeared in the public journals*.

Respectfully your obedient servant,

W. T. G. MORTON.

*Boston, March 4th, 1847.*

---

#### DR. JACKSON AND DR. MORTON.—LETHEON.

MR. EDITOR:—

There appeared in the columns of your paper, of March 1st, an article signed by *Charles T. Jackson*, which contains statements wholly new to me, and probably to many others—statements, which I propose in a brief and candid manner to discuss. And in doing this, a succinct history of the matter therein involved—the discovery of the new use of Sulphuric Ether—will not, I trust, be deemed irrelevant. This is a subject which is now engrossing much



attention, both in the eastern and the western hemisphere; and one may safely conclude that, from present prospects, this interest in what is termed, in Europe, "the greatest contribution to medical science from the new world," is not to diminish, but rather to increase, until the real merits of the discovery are fully established.

In the communication in question, Dr. Jackson sets out with a singular misrepresentation, by giving to the public a paper addressed to the Academy of Arts and Sciences, and purporting to have been submitted to them, which, in fact, had never been laid before them, and of which they knew nothing, save through the public journals. If this paper had been submitted to the Academy for their action, it was no longer the property of the writer, until that action was had. But if it had not been so submitted, then a fraud has been perpetrated in making it public as a document that has received the sanction of that learned body.

In the next place, great injustice has been done to another individual, by making this publication at all, without consulting all parties interested. It is well known in this community, if not throughout the country, and in Great Britain, that the chief credit of the discovery in question belongs, not to Dr. Charles T. Jackson, the Chemist, but to William T. G. Morton, the Dentist. But, before going into this matter, it may be stated, that, after the discovery became somewhat notorious, and a *man of science* thought it no longer dangerous to his reputation to be named in connection with it, the friends of both claimants met together, and settled the relative merits of each, Dr. Jackson and Dr. Morton both expressing themselves fully satisfied with the result. By this agreement, Dr. Morton was to continue to have the sole management of the invention, by paying the other party a fixed per cent. on the net receipts, and Dr. Jackson binding himself to make no publication, and to say nothing further about the matter, not in keeping with the spirit of this understanding.

But as the matter spread and increased in interest, Dr. Jackson became again uneasy, throwing out many threats of "blowing the whole thing up," &c. &c., thinking, that he was either not likely to get his share of the credit, or of the profits arising from the discovery; so he addressed several letters to distinguished men in Europe, and particularly to some French *savans*, in one of which, to M. Elie de Beaumont, and published in Galignani's Messenger of about the 25th of January, he says: "I request permission to communicate to the (French) Academy, through you, a discovery *which I have made*, and which I regard as important to suffering humanity." And in the same letter: "*I have latterly turned this discovery to use, by inducing a dentist of this city to administer the vapor of ether to persons whose teeth he was going to extract,*" and other similar passages.

Now it will be observed, that not only has Dr. Jackson failed to adhere to his pledges, as before referred to, but he has, with the most extraordinary effrontery, carefully avoided even mentioning the name of the man to whom he had yielded up his whole interest in the discovery for *ten per centum* of the

net proceeds ! And this, too, in the face of the statements contained in the preamble of the Letters Patent, which are as follows, namely : "Whereas, Charles T. Jackson, and William T. G. Morton, Boston, Mass., have alleged that *they have invented* a new and useful improvement in surgical operations, (the said Jackson having assigned his right, title and interest in said improvement to the aforesaid Wm. T. G. Morton) which, they state, has not been known before their application ; have *made oath*, that they are citizens of the United States ; that they do verily believe, that *they are the original inventors* or discoverers of the said improvement, and that the same hath not, to the best of their knowledge and belief, been *previously known or used*," &c. And also in the paper before referred to, in which Dr. Jackson released his whole interest in the same discovery to Dr. Morton, which release begins as follows : "To all persons to whom these presents shall come : Whereas I, Charles T. Jackson, of Boston, in the State of Massachusetts, chemist, have, *in conjunction with William T. G. Morton*, of said city, dentist, invented or discovered a new and useful improvement in surgical operations on animals, &c. &c. : I have, therefore, in consideration of one dollar to me in hand paid, the receipt whereof I do hereby acknowledge, assigned, set over and conveyed, and by these presents do assign, set over and convey to the said Morton and his legal representatives, all the right, title and interest whatever, which I possess in the said invention or discovery, a specification of which I have this day (the 27th October, 1846,) signed and executed in conjunction with him for the purpose of enabling him to procure a patent thereon. And I do hereby request the Commissioner of Patents to issue the said patent to the said Morton *in his name*, and as my assignee, or legal representative, to the extent of all my right, title and interest whatever in the said invention or discovery." I say he has, in the face of his agreement before referred to, in disregard of his assignment in the letters patent, and in his release last above given, and contrary to the sense of justice and right, privately made the publications referred to, and various others, which no feelings of propriety or equity will justify.

In the letter to M. Beaumont, from which I have already made extracts, Dr. Jackson says : "Five or six years ago, I remarked the *peculiar state of insensibility* into which the nervous system was plunged by the inhalation of the vapor of pure sulphuric ether," &c. Previously to this, he had stated, *under oath*, in the preamble to the specifications, that "the same hath not, to the best of his knowledge and belief, *been previously known*. Now, Dr. Jackson either did know previous to this time, (the 27th of October, 1846,) that sulphuric ether would produce insensibility to pain, or he did not. If he did, as stated in his letter to M. Beaumont, then I have to remind him of his oath, under the solemnity of which he states that, according to the best of his knowledge and belief, *the "fact had not been before known ;"* but if he did not, then I remind him of his statement to M. Beaumont, in which he says that he *had known it for "five or six years."* And the learned doctor can take either horn of the dilemma he may prefer.

It is not known that Dr. Jackson ever made more than one experiment in inhaling ether; and then he used it as an antidote to the vapor of chlorine, which he had accidentally breathed. But from his own statement in the *Advertiser*, it did not answer the purpose, the deleterious effects returning with the return of consciousness. But supposing he had known of it six years or six months before Dr. Morton applied it in practice; is it not inexcusable in him to have withheld from suffering humanity this inestimable boon so long—a boon by the gift of which, such an incalculable amount of misery might have been saved? Or, is it within the limits of probability that, if he had been so long in possession of a discovery which, if made known, would, in four months, call down blessings on his head from ten thousand hearts, and from all civilized lands, and which, from present prospects, would make him to be remembered and cherished, by the side of Jenner, by all coming generations, and to all coming time,—I say, is it probable, had he known of this noble gift, that he would not have been most zealous in publishing it to the world? If he did make this discovery, is it not a remarkable coincidence, that Dr. Morton should have made it at the same time, and still more remarkable, that Dr. Jackson should leave the honor to another to make his discovery known?

But let us suppose that Dr. Morton, in making his experiments, had caused the death of one or more of his patients, would Dr. Jackson then have come forward and taken the whole responsibility, and, in publishing an account of this untoward accident in the *French Journals*, taken the whole fault upon himself, suppressing *even the name* of the immediate agent in the unhappy affair? Or, to adduce a case in point: When Dr. Flagg and his coadjutors came out against Dr. M., calling him “Mr.” Morton (!), denouncing the use of the ether, and citing a long list of “accidents” that had, as they said, already happened in his practice, and thinking it their duty to *suffering humanity* to strangle this Hercules of a discovery in its cradle, thereby, for a time, greatly injuring the reputation and practice of Dr. M.;—at this critical moment in the history of the young discovery, who came forth to its defence? Dr. Jackson, who knew these allegations to be false, and who could have satisfied the public that the ether could be administered with safety? Certainly not; but he also joined in the cry, pronouncing the new invention a “humbug,” and Dr. Morton “reckless,” for using it!

Dr. Jackson, in the extract from his letter to M. Beaumont, already given, says, that he had turned this discovery to use by inducing a dentist to use it in the extraction of teeth. Now it is well known, that, for ages, it has been the desire of the humane, in all countries, to discover some method of alleviating the suffering of those who were about to submit to severe and cruel surgical operations. And, amongst others who had given direct thought and attention to this subject, Dr. Morton may be named.

For more than two years, he had bestowed much thought upon this important inquiry. At the commencement of that period, he was a student of Dr. Jackson, with whom he often conversed on this and similar topics. But it was not

till September, 1846, that a direct trial was made with sulphuric ether. About that time, Dr. Morton called on Dr. Jackson, to get some information in furtherance of his researches; and, during the conversation that ensued, in which the old topic of the inhalation of sulphuric ether and nitrous oxide gas by the students at college came up, Dr. M. inquired why he could not give the ether to his patients. Dr. Jackson said he could, and advised him to get some, of Burnett, highly rectified, at the same time explaining to him the nature of sulphuric ether, and its effects, so far as known, on the system, assuring him it might be safely applied, although the next morning he declined giving a certificate to this effect.

Dr. Morton procured the ether, and, returning home, locked himself in his room, when he saturated a sponge with it and began to inhale, noting down accurately when the inhalation commenced. Soon he recollects beginning to grow dizzy, when, letting the sponge fall, he fell back in his chair, after which he seems, for a time, to have been totally unconscious. On coming to himself, he again looked at his watch, and found, to his inexpressible delight, that he had been *insensible eight minutes!* He then left his room, anxious to try the ether upon one of his patients, when fortunately a stout healthy man appeared, to have a tooth extracted. The ether was administered and the tooth taken out, the man avowing a total unconsciousness of its removal! *And this is the first painless operation ever performed by similar means in surgery!*

Subsequently, attempts were made by the same method, but without any satisfactory results, until, at length, after many trials made to produce a proper apparatus, and finding the one recommended by Dr. Jackson entirely useless, Dr. Morton arrived at a result, which seemed to be what he desired. And from that day the importance of the discovery began to develop itself, and the experiments were perfectly, or nearly perfectly, successful.

Dr. Morton, let it be observed, inhaled the ether on the 30th September; but it was not until the 21st November following, it is believed, that Dr. Jackson witnessed an operation, which was on that day performed at the Bromfield House, at which he, with several others, was invited to be present; nor has he, from that day to this, or ever, by his own recent admissions, made any experiments himself to test the importance of the discovery, or whether a state of insensibility sufficient to admit of a severe surgical operation being performed without pain, could be induced by the inhalation of sulphuric ether.

In Dr. Jackson's letter to M. Beaumont, he says:—"It was observed, that no unpleasant consequences attended the administration of the ether, and *I then advised this dentist to go to the General Hospital of Massachusetts, to administer it to a patient who was about to undergo a painful operation.*"

Now it is well known, in this community and to all of his acquaintances, that Dr. Jackson is a gentleman, whose moral character is unimpeached and unimpeachable, a gentleman than whom no one has more warm personal friends. And this renders it doubly painful to say that he has perverted the truth, although believing, as I do, that it must have happened through forget-



fulness alone, that he made such a statement,—a statement which, as its errors have been pointed out to him since its appearance in this country, he has had ample time to correct. The whole tenor of the letter referred to, is to give the impression that Dr. Morton was under Dr. Jackson's advice and direction, than which nothing could be more unjust and erroneous. From first to last, it is well known that Dr. Morton has acted wholly on his own responsibility; and that at no time did he ask Dr. Jackson for his advice *or directions*, for he seldom saw him. This is too absurd a position to be refuted, and would not have been alluded to, had not this letter to M. Beaumont produced a most unfair and erroneous impression in France, wholly opposed to truth, and had not all the communications in the Paris papers on this subject, ascribing the credit of the discovery to Dr. Jackson, originated from that and other letters, written in dereliction of positive promises, and the face of his written release to Dr. Morton, in which the most he claimed was to be considered a "*joint discoverer*," while, in this letter, he takes the whole credit, and does not so much as mention the name of Dr. Morton.

He claims to have advised Dr. Morton to go to the Hospital, and give the ether to a patient. Dr. Morton went there on invitation from the House Surgeon, at the request of Dr. Warren, and it is not known that Dr. Jackson had any knowledge of such an invitation being given, or that the operation was to be performed. It is unaccountable, that a man of Dr. Jackson's standing, and general high sense of honor and justice, could have been capable of so much assurance—to call it by no harsher name—as to say that he had "latterly turned this discovery to use, by *inducing* a dentist of this city to give the vapor," &c. In his communication, published in the Advertiser of March 1st, he says he "was *desirous* of testing it (the ether) in a capital operation," &c.; and that Dr. J. C. Warren "politely consented to have the trial made," &c.; whereas, Dr. Morton called on Dr. H. J. Bigelow, who spoke to Dr. Hayward on the subject of the further use of the ether, the latter objecting until he knew what the vapor to be given was; but on learning this, gave his consent, and Dr. Morton went accordingly, never knowing Dr. Jackson in the matter any way. On arriving at the Hospital, a consultation was had among all the surgeons present, as to the propriety of continuing to use the new anodyne process, when it was determined to do so. It was not for several weeks, and even months after, that Dr. Jackson was present at the Hospital to witness an operation—certainly, not until more than two months after the discovery had been made. For a long time previous to calling on Dr. Jackson, and previous to the 30th September, Dr. Morton had been firmly possessed with the thought—he had the *idea* indelibly fixed in his mind—that he could produce the desired state of insensibility by the inhalation of some kind of gas or vapor, and had tried various experiments to ascertain what would do it. In furtherance of this purpose, he called several times on Mr. Wightman, philosophical instrument maker, Cornhill, to procure an apparatus. These calls extended through two or three weeks prior to the 28th of September, 1846, as appears by Mr.



W.'s books. Mr. Wightman says he recollects about these calls perfectly ; that Dr. Morton wished to procure an inhaling apparatus ; that he then *smelt the ether about Dr. Morton's clothes*, and that Dr. Morton inquired, if "it would do to put ether in an India-rubber bag ;" and, on being answered in the negative, he again inquired, if it would do to put it in a silk bag, upon which Dr. W. replied, that he did not know, but advised Dr. M. *to go to Dr. Jackson*. Other persons can bear similar testimony ; but this would be irrelevant here, and must be left for a more befitting occasion.

But, to settle this whole matter—and it might have been done in the outset, to the satisfaction of any candid mind—after Dr. Morton began to use the ether in his practice, and for some weeks, it is well known to a large number of our most respectable citizens, that Dr. Jackson clearly and distinctly repudiated and washed his hands of the whole thing. He, on many occasions, as is well known to his friends, disclaimed all connexion with the discovery, or use, of ether in surgery. A gentleman of high standing asked Dr. Jackson, in presence of several others, if he "knew that, by the inhalation of ether, such a state of insensibility could be produced, as that the knife could be applied, and the patient feel no pain." Dr. Jackson replied, "No, nor Morton either, nor any one else ; *it is a humbug*, and it is reckless in Morton to use it as he does." In speaking to two other persons, at different times, on this subject, he said, "I don't care what he (Morton) does with it (the discovery) if he does not drag my name in with it." At another time, he said, he "did not know how it would work in pulling teeth, but knew its effects at college, upon the students, when the faculty had to get a certificate from a physician, that it was injurious, to prevent them from using it." The above, and other statements even stronger, can be verified by affidavits.

E. W.

*Boston, March 2, 1847.*

---

*From the Boston Post, March 6, 1846.*

Boston, March 2, 1847.

MY DEAR SIR,—In reply to yours of the 1st instant, relative to the recent memoir of Dr. C. T. Jackson, published in the Boston Daily Advertiser of the 1st instant, and designed to be read before the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, I would say that I am not less astonished than yourself at the exclusive claim of Dr. Jackson to the merit of discovering the value of sulphuric ether for the prevention of pain in dental and surgical operations.

Some three or four years ago, Dr. Morton, then a student of medicine, the better to enable him to make rapid progress in his studies, resided in the family of Dr. C. T. Jackson. He there enjoyed opportunities of increasing his knowledge of chemistry, and the further privilege of proposing to a skilful

practical chemist, such questions and difficulties as the study suggested to his mind. Afterwards, when he had removed from the doctor's family, he was still in the habit of consulting him in matters pertaining to chemistry and dentistry.

Dr. Morton, having overcome the principal difficulties in his profession, and attained a high reputation as a skilful dentist, determined, as many others had done unsuccessfully before him, to seek for some means by which the pain attending dental operations might be greatly alleviated, if not entirely prevented. This purpose, some time in the month of July last, he disclosed to his friends, and particularly to several young gentlemen who were then students in his office. In the prosecution of his design, he made numerous experiments; he conversed also with Mr. Wightman, a philosophical instrument maker of this city, with a view of procuring the construction of apparatus for the inhalation of vapors or gases. At one of these interviews, Mr. Wightman recommended the use of India-rubber bags; and, in the course of conversation, Dr. Morton inquired the effect of ether on such a bag, and whether it was injurious or not.

Soon afterwards, about the last of September, Dr. Morton called upon Dr. Jackson for the purpose of borrowing an India-rubber bag. Dr. Jackson, being at that time engaged with his pupils, requested Dr. Morton to procure it for himself, and, upon his return to the laboratory with the bag, desired to know to what use he intended to apply it. Dr. Morton, to conceal his own purpose, replied that he should fill it with atmospheric air, and hoped thereby to act upon the imagination of a patient upon whose teeth he wished to operate, somewhat after the manner of the cases stated in the medical books. Dr. Jackson remarked that he ought not to attempt to deceive his patients, and, during the conversation, referred to nitrous oxide and the failure in its use which Dr. Morton, and Dr. Wells, his former partner, had met with. He alluded, also, to sulphuric ether, and the effect its vapor produced upon the Cambridge students who had inhaled it. Dr. Morton then asked why he could not give it to his patients; to which Dr. Jackson replied that he could. Some conversation was then had as to the safety of its use, and Dr. Morton was assured that it would not be attended with danger, and was advised to try it first upon himself, by inhaling from a handkerchief containing it. Dr. Morton then asked for some to use. Dr. Jackson said his was not good, but referred him to a druggist of whom he could procure a pure article.

Dr. Morton, returning to his office, immediately proceeded to try his experiments, first upon himself, and then upon a patient who applied for the extraction of a tooth, and had the satisfaction of seeing them crowned with success. The next day he communicated to Dr. Jackson the result he had attained; conversed on the best mode of administering it, but does not remember seeing him again till nearly three weeks afterwards. In the mean time, he made

known to the public the discovery; employed it in his dental operations; and made numerous improvements in the apparatus for administering it.

It was not until successful operations in the General Hospital had been effected by its aid, that Dr. Jackson appears to have thought of attaching any credit to himself for its discovery. On the contrary, during the first two or three weeks in October, when questioned upon the subject, he disavowed his belief in its efficacy in surgical operations, declared that he would have nothing to do with it, and that Dr. Morton was reckless in trying such experiments.

In the month of October, application was made for letters patent; and in November following they were issued—securing to Dr. Morton and his legal representatives, the exclusive right of using, and vending to be used, this important improvement in surgical operations. Dr. Jackson previously, for a valuable consideration, assigned all his right, title and interest in the improvement to Dr. Morton.

In the letters patent, it appears that Doctors Jackson and Morton made oath that they believed they were "*the original and first inventors or discoverers of said improvement*, and that the same had not, to the best of their knowledge and belief, been previously known or used." The schedule referred to in the letters patent, and which is subscribed by Dr. Jackson and Dr. Morton, commences thus: "To all persons," &c. "be it known that *we*, Charles T. Jackson and William T. G. Morton, of Boston, in the county of Suffolk and State of Massachusetts, have *invented or discovered* a new and useful improvement in surgical operations on animals," &c. Further on, they state, "It has never been known until *our discovery*, that the inhalation of vapors would produce insensibility to pain," &c.; "this is *our* discovery, and the combining it with, or applying it to, any operation in surgery, for the purpose of alleviating animal suffering," &c. "constitutes *our* invention." They close the schedule thus: "What we claim as *our* invention is the hereinbefore-described means by which we are enabled to effect the above highly important improvement in surgical operations." The schedule is dated October 27, 1846, and signed by both Dr. Jackson and Dr. Morton. From these extracts it appears that Dr. Jackson did not claim the *sole* invention or discovery of this surgical improvement, but, throughout, admits the agency and coöperation of Dr. Morton as a *joint* discoverer. He constantly speaks of it as being *our* invention, *our* discovery. Moreover, he made oath that himself and Dr. Morton were the *original* and *first* inventors or discoverers. These statements were subscribed and this oath taken before the vast importance of the discovery was fully understood, and perhaps before the ambition of appearing to the world and to coming ages as the sole discoverer had kindled in his breast.

The preceding statement embraces, substantially, all the material facts relevant to the discovery of the use and application of Letheon in surgical operations. And it thence appears that Dr. Jackson and Dr. Morton were both concerned in making the discovery, and that to Dr. Morton *alone* belongs the merit of bringing it into practical use before the world.

Dr. Morton had constantly in view a series of different experiments, with the design of inventing or discovering some means by which pain in dental operations might be mitigated or prevented. He gathered hints and suggestions from every quarter, and, among others, received them from Dr. Jackson.

Before I close this letter, already too far extended, allow me to direct your attention to certain points of Dr. Jackson's memoir, not altogether consistent with impartial justice to Dr. Morton. In one paragraph, Dr. Jackson says: "It is now a year since I urgently advised Mr. J. Peabody, who was associated with me as a pupil in chemistry, to inhale the ether vapor as a means of preventing pain which would arise from the extraction of two of his teeth." Did Dr. Jackson at this time *know* that the inhalation of vapor would prevent pain attending dental operations? If he did not know it, he cannot claim the honor of it. If he did know it, why has the discovery been so long concealed? Why did he not *then* announce it to the world? Why did he not *then* prosecute experiments with its aid in the hospital, and *then* inform Dr. Warren and other physicians in Boston that the inhalation of ether vapor would prevent pain in surgical operations? No physician knew of it, until informed through the agency of Dr. Morton. Why did he not *then* acquaint his scientific friends in France and England with the discovery, instead of waiting until six or eight months afterwards, when the zeal and enterprise of Dr. Morton had published it to the world? These and similar questions must be satisfactorily answered, before the world will acquiesce in the claim of Dr. Jackson as being the first discoverer.

In the next paragraph Dr. Jackson says: "About the last of September, or early in October last, I communicated *my discovery* to Dr. W. T. G. Morton." What Dr. Jackson has just before intimated, he now declares, and claims it as *his* discovery, and one which was unknown to Dr. Morton. Yet three months previously, he made solemn oath that himself and Dr. Morton were the original discoverers. These two statements are inconsistent with each other, and if one must be rejected, that which is the least authoritative must yield to the one fortified by the sanction of a deliberate, solemn oath. The latter claim of being sole discoverer we must, therefore, set aside as inadvertently made.

Dr. Jackson, in the same paragraph, says, that he proposed to Dr. Morton "the trial of ether in a surgical operation at the Massachusetts General Hospital." Now, Dr. Morton has assured me that the idea of using it at the hospital originated entirely with himself, and that he has not the slightest recollection of the proposal that Dr. Jackson alludes to. He is not even aware that he had any interview with Dr. Jackson from the day following the discovery till nearly a week after experiments had been made at the hospital.

One more remark, and I will close. Suppose that Dr. Morton, following the suggestion of Dr. Jackson, had administered ether to his patient, effected his dental operation, and that the consequence had been fatal. Upon whom would the blame have rested? Would Dr. Jackson have been as prompt in

acknowledging to the world his agency in the unfortunate experiment as he now is since the experiment has been attended with complete success? Admit that Dr. Jackson would have assumed the blame of such a catastrophe, would that have shielded Dr. Morton from the indignation with which he would have been regarded by the public? Did Dr. Jackson so involve himself in the matter that the law would have viewed him as a "particeps criminis?" Would not Dr. Morton, and he alone, have been amenable for malpractice? But the experiment was successful. Let, then, Dr. M. enjoy his share of the honor which the discoverer of this wonderful improvement in surgical operations is justly entitled to.

With great respect, I am truly yours,

To Dr. ————.

DR. HORACE WELLS, whose name has been introduced in the former part of these pages, seems to require a remark or two further, since it is understood that he is insisting most seriously upon asserting his claims to Dr. Morton's discovery. There is a brief history to his note contained in this pamphlet, which is this:—When Dr. M. made his discovery, he wrote to Dr. Wells, his former partner, then residing at Hartford, Ct., requesting him to come at once to Boston, and aid in introducing this discovery to the public. In answer to this request, he wrote to Dr. Morton the note before given, saying he would be on at a certain time, but never mentioning any claims of his own to the same thing, as will appear by a re-perusal of his letter. He came, as stated, witnessed the administration of the ether, pronounced it "dangerous" and "risky," and, after two or three days, returned home, determined not to have any thing to do with the business.

Not long after, and the next time Dr. Morton heard from Dr. Wells, he received a letter from his old partner, in which claim is laid to the discovery as entirely his own! so that all he knew of the use of sulphuric ether in preventing pain, he seems to have gained during these two or three days in Dr. Morton's office. This was enough, however, for his purpose, and soon after he set out for Europe to substantiate these claims there!

While in Washington the past winter, endeavoring to induce our Government to introduce this discovery into the army in Mexico, and after getting the matter referred to a select committee of the House of



Representatives, I learned, with some surprise, that the Hon. Mr. Dixon, member of Congress from Connecticut, and townsman of Dr. Wells, had sent in a sort of informal protest to the committee's further proceedings, until a client of his, this same Dr. Wells, had forwarded certain testimony in his favor. This was early in January. I immediately called on Mr. Dixon, who stated that Dr. W. had promised to furnish him with certain evidence of his claims; but, having gone to Europe without procuring it, he did not think it would arrive at all, and if not by a certain day—then near at hand—he would aid me in my efforts; at the same time saying, as near as I can now recollect, that, about two years ago, he had heard that Dr. Wells was making some experiments with *nitrous oxide gas*, to prevent pain in extracting teeth; that, having a severe tooth-ache, he called on him and proposed to take this gas; but that Dr. Wells informed him that, after giving it to thirteen or fourteen patients, with only partial success, he had abandoned its use as dangerous, and dissuaded him from using it. This was about the last of Dr. Wells's attempts to produce the desired state of insensibility to pain, until his visit to Dr. Morton towards the last of October, 1846. And now all he claims is, to have discovered a *principle*; but how? Have not thousands, in all ages before him, made similar attempts to discover so great a *desideratum*? Have they succeeded? or has Dr. Wells succeeded, with his nitrous oxide gas, which he absolutely prefers to sulphuric ether? If so, where are his experiments recorded? in what Medical Journal, what newspaper—where?

---

#### DR. JACKSON'S IDEA OF THE DISCOVERY.

The following, the substance of a statement made by a gentleman of the highest respectability, on the subject of Dr. Morton's discovery of the use of ether gas for preventing pain in surgical operations, has been repeated before several persons of undoubted veracity, as well as to the writer, and whose name can be given to any one who may desire it:—

“Some time before the letters patent were applied for, Dr. Charles T. Jackson and myself being in company with a number of other gentlemen, I introduced the subject of Dr. Morton's experiments in the use of ether gas in preventing pain in surgical operations, and told Dr. Jackson that Morton claimed that he could entirely prevent the sensa-

tion of pain by the use of this gas; and that Morton had admitted that Dr. Jackson had had something to do with the matter. I suggested the propriety of taking out a patent in the name of Dr. Morton and Dr. Jackson. Dr. Jackson replied, that it was all a humbug, and that Morton was a reckless fellow for using it as he did, and would kill somebody yet; that there was nothing in the pretended discovery; that the use of ether gas never did, and never would, prevent pain in surgical operations; and that, if he should undertake to get out a patent for such a thing as that, he would, at once, be scouted from the medical profession. Dr. Jackson then proceeded to state the history of the matter as far as he was acquainted with it. He said that Morton came one day to his house, and told him that there was a fussy old woman who kept coming to him, and that she wanted to have something done to a tooth; that she acted so that he could not do any thing with her, but that something must be done; and he wanted Jackson to give him something to put her to sleep with. Then Dr. Jackson suggested that she might smell some ether, and Morton requested of him the loan of his gas-bags in order to administer the ether to her in the usual way. But Dr. Jackson replied that the gas-bags were in his garret, and it was not worth the while to hunt them up, and told him to pour the ether into a rag and put it under her nose, and that would do just as well. Morton took some gas and went away; and that was the last Dr. Jackson knew about it. I then told Dr. Jackson that I had heard the statements of various experiments made by Dr. Morton with this ether gas, and that I had very little doubt that it would produce the effect that he alleged."

---

"**LETHEON.**" Lest any one should object to this term, used at the beginning of this pamphlet, I would observe, that it is only used to avoid circumlocution. The same idea might be conveyed differently: as, for instance, "A process for the prevention of pain in surgical operations;" but the name given to the discovery in question answers the same purpose, and has the further recommendation of brevity.











MANUFACTURED BY

letheon.  
Call no.

11.16

